

Editor's Note: Issue 5.1

Eric Murphy Selinger

Published online: August 2015

<http://www.jprstudies.org>

The *Journal of Popular Romance Studies* started publishing almost exactly five years ago: August 4, 2010, by the date-stamp on the **Editor's Note for Issue 1.1**. That note announced, a little grandly, that we were going to be a "peer-reviewed on-line journal dedicated to scholarship on the representation of romantic love in popular media, now and in the past, from anywhere in the world," and that we would "build a community that includes academics, independent scholars, industry professionals, and serious general readers." To build that broad community we made *JPRS* an open-access journal, free to read and download, and we invited comments on all of our articles, hoping to stir up the kinds of discussions we admired on listservs and romance review / discussion websites.

The comment feature didn't last long. Our mission statement, too, has been revised and professionalized, with an added emphasis on making *JPRS* a home for scholarship on teaching and learning the popular culture of romantic love. (A crisp new "About the Journal" description can be found at our **home page**.) Yet, as a glance at the table of contents for issue 5.1 suggests, our commitments to internationalism and interdisciplinarity have only deepened over the years, and we remain dedicated to bringing the voices of scholars and creative professionals into productive conversation.

In this issue, Jyoti Raghu's essay on the "religion of love in American film" sits comfortably beside Helene Ehriander's analysis of Swedish "chick-lit in corsets" and Karin Heiss's account of teaching British Regency and desert romance at Friedrich-Alexander University Erlangen-Nürnberg in Bavaria, Germany. In "Love in the Desert" historian Stacy Holden offers an analysis of the ways that American romance authors talk about writing sheikh romances in a post-9/11 context—an analysis to which Holden invited novelist Megan Crane to offer an "Author's Response." (The lines between scholar and creative practitioner are sometimes fuzzy in the romance world; Crane has, we note, a Ph.D. in literature of her own.) The voice of the romance author can also be heard in a lively interview with award-winning American romance author Susan Elizabeth Phillips, a follow-up to Lisa Fletcher's **interview with Anne Gracie** in *JPRS* 4.2 and the Rita Dandridge interview with **Beverly Jenkins** in our inaugural issue, five years ago.

Two years ago, our Book Review editor announced that we would be taking "a new, more expansive approach to the book review section here at *JPRS*," and we are delighted to

offer a particularly robust set of reviews and review-essays in this new issue. Our reviewers discuss books on Indian film, critical love studies, modernist literary history, and feminist / queer theoretical accounts of “the erotic, sexuality, and objectification,” all of which should offer new methodologies and approaches to scholars of popular romance in any medium.

Issue 5.1 also contains our Special Issue on Romancing the Library, guest edited by Crystal Goldman, an Associate Librarian at the University of California-San Diego. As Goldman explains in her Editor’s Note, this gathering of essays builds on and brings to print some of the conversations about library science and popular romance studies—conversations related both to academic library collection development and to the representation of popular romance in public library contexts—which have played out over the last six years at conferences hosted by the Popular Culture Association and by IASPR, the International Association for the Study of Popular Romance. Anyone interested in the reception, representation, and archival preservation of popular romance will find material of interest in these three essays, and we hope they will spur new research and publication on the topic.

Five years ago, *JPRS* was a shoestring operation—even, at times, a one-man show. Today, the masthead staff of the journal includes rising and established scholars from five countries and three continents, and our latest special issue Call for Papers, on **Critical Love Studies**, marks an exciting collaboration between our Book Review Editor, Amy Burge, and Michael Gratzke, founder of the **Love Research Network** and a member of the *JPRS* Editorial Board. Several books have been published including work that was originally published in *JPRS*, notably Hsu-Ming Teo’s *Desert Passions: Orientalism and Romance Novels* and Jin Feng’s *Romancing the Internet: Producing and Consuming Chinese Web Romance*, and another will be coming out next spring, *Happily Ever After: the Romance Story in Popular Culture* by Catherine M. Roach, an **early portion** of which was featured in our very first issue. We are delighted to see *JPRS* mentioned in academic and journalistic discussions of popular romance—and, to be honest, even when we are not mentioned by name, we are happy to see that the topics and approaches featured in *JPRS* are slowly but surely reshaping the public discussion of popular romance. In turn, we continue to learn from the sophistication and expertise of discussions that take place in the wider romance community: the many authors, editors, publishers, reviewers, librarians, and scholars who share their knowledge and insight on blogs and through social media. We follow many of these voices on Twitter, where you can follow us, in turn, as **@jprstudies**. We hope that you will stay in touch, and if you have suggestions for new interview subjects, books to review, or topics for special issues, please let us know.